



Huntsville Council of Parent Teacher Associations

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April 30, 2014

2012/2013 Officers

Elisa Ferrell
President

Chaundra Jones
Vice-President Membership

Preeti Francis
Vice-President Legislative Affairs

Ann Kvach
Vice-President Family Engagement

Kathie Rooker
Vice-President Technology

Debbie Tetrault
Secretary

Layna Payne
Treasurer

Melvin Scruggs
Concessions Manager

The Honorable Madeline Hughes Haikala
United States District Court
Hugo L. Black U. S. Courthouse
1729 Fifth Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203

Dear Judge Haikala:

The Executive Board of the Huntsville Council of PTAs is comprised of parents who have children in every school district of Huntsville City Schools. We are a diverse group of individuals with varying racial and educational backgrounds. Some of us have elementary-age children, some have children in middle and high school, and some have children who have already graduated from the system. What we do have in common is that we highly value education and always strive to advocate for what is best for children throughout the system. Many of us are either currently serving as PTA Presidents or have served as PTA Presidents at our children's schools. We volunteer regularly as tutors in the classroom, assist in the school office, and coordinate various other school activities. Being Council Board members we are frequently asked to assist with issues or events at schools throughout the district. Consequently, we have an extensive knowledge of what occurs at schools throughout the district. In addition, most of us attend Huntsville City Schools Board of Education meetings on a regular basis and have done so for years. As such we have a unique insight into the state of Huntsville City Schools at all levels of the organization.

Through these years of involvement with Huntsville City Schools we have seen evidence that leads us to believe that the Huntsville City Schools Board of Education and the Superintendent, Dr. Casey Wardynski, are committed to providing the same opportunities to all children throughout our large school system regardless of race or socioeconomic status. The following are some examples that we consider evidence of this commitment. However, this is not an exhaustive list.

First, Huntsville City Schools undertook the Digital 1:1 Initiative in school year 2012-2013. Through this initiative every child enrolled in Huntsville City Schools received either a laptop or an iPad based on their grade. All textbooks are digital and loaded onto the computers, and all schools were equipped with wireless access so that all children had access to a vast array of learning materials. This has helped children from all over the district have access to the same educational materials. In addition, the school system worked with the city to provide internet access at various community centers so that the children who did not have access at home could still have internet access after-hours. They also made parents aware of ways to subscribe to extremely low-cost internet access.



Huntsville Council of Parent Teacher Associations

Further, teachers instruct children about appropriate computer and internet use. This initiative appears to be helping us narrow the digital divide so that all graduates of Huntsville City Schools will be familiar and comfortable with digital technology when they graduate. Further, it has helped teachers personalize the education our children receive. By using these digital tools, all high school students enrolled in Huntsville City Schools also have access to free online ACT preparatory materials. Once again, this gives every child who graduates from Huntsville City Schools an opportunity to be well prepared for this college entrance exam regardless of where they live and whether their parents can afford to pay for these preparatory classes.

Second, this summer, credit recovery classes will be offered at our northernmost and southernmost high schools free of charge. Thus, students throughout the district who need to enroll in the credit recovery program will have access to these classes regardless of whether their parents are able to pay for them to attend. In addition, Project Lead the Way (a project-based method of teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will be implemented in every elementary and middle school in Huntsville City Schools this fall.

Third, Huntsville City Schools pays stipends not only to teachers who coach athletic teams but also to those who coach academic teams at every school from elementary school to high school. Once again, this gives every child enrolled in the system the opportunity to challenge him or herself and supports teachers who are engaged in this effort.

In addition to our children's academic well-being, Huntsville City Schools has made efforts to improve their physical well-being as well. Huntsville City Schools has undertaken various capital improvement projects at schools across the city. All facilities were assessed and their needs determined. Based on this assessment, some schools have been repainted and had flooring replaced, some schools have had extensive renovations, and some others are in the process of getting entirely new facilities. Further, understanding that hungry children will not be able to learn they have instituted the Breakfast in the Classroom program in all Title One schools in the system. All students at participating schools eat breakfast with their teacher in the classroom before instruction begins. Recognizing that children must be well fed even when school is not in session, Huntsville City Schools has enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture's Summer Feeding Program. This makes it possible for all children regardless of race or socioeconomic status to eat three hot meals a day at no cost. Adults who attend can also eat at a very low cost.

Based on these actions our Board is of the opinion that Huntsville City Schools Board of Education and Superintendent, Dr. Casey Wardynski, are committed to ensuring that all children enrolled in Huntsville City Schools have the opportunity to pursue an excellent education that prepares them for the workplace of the 21st century, regardless of their race or socioeconomic status. Our Board is comprised of seven members. Of these, six have children enrolled in schools that will be significantly impacted by the proposed rezoning plan of Huntsville City Schools. We take the actions described above as evidence that our Board of Education and Superintendent have taken steps to ensure that all children will continue to receive an excellent education. This will be a difficult but necessary step as we move away from our past and look toward the future.



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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elisa Ferrell", written over a horizontal line.

Elisa Ferrell, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chaundra Jones", written over a horizontal line.

Chaundra Jones, Vice-President, Membership

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Preeti Francis", written over a horizontal line.

Preeti Francis, Vice-President, Legislation

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann Kvach", written over a horizontal line.

Ann Kvach, Vice-President, Family Engagement

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathie Rooker", written over a horizontal line.

Kathie Rooker, Vice-President, Technology

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Layna Payne", written over a horizontal line.

Layna Payne, Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Debbie Tetraault", written over a horizontal line.

Debbie Tetraault, Secretary

Case 5:63-cv-00109-MHH

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 1, 2014, I mailed the foregoing document through the United States Post Office by Priority Mail to counsel for the parties in this case with names, addresses, email addresses and tracking numbers listed below. I also certify that the foregoing was also transmitted electronically to counsel for the parties in the case at the below referenced email addresses.

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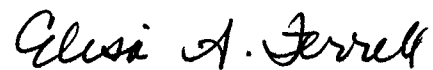
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Case 5:63-cv-00109-MHH

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